

REMARKS

Claims 10-20 are cancelled, without prejudice. Claims 1 and 2 are amended. Claims 21-25 are now presented for consideration. No new subject matter is added, as the new claims are fully supported by the original application at, e.g., claim 1, FIGs. 3A-3E, and FIGs. 6A-6D. Claims 1-9 and 21-25 are now pending in the application.

The amendment to claims 1 and 2 overcomes the objection to the specification.

The applicant respectfully disagrees that claims 1-3, 5, and 9 are unpatentable over US RE 31,990 to Sluetz et al. (“Sluetz”) in view of US 4,365,639 to Goldreyer (“Goldreyer”). Claim 1 recites that each lead connector contact is joined to a corresponding electrode of the circumferential array. Contrary to this feature, Sluetz teaches that the proximal connector 1 has two electrodes 5, 20 that are electrically connected to the same tissue-stimulating electrode through the conductor 55 (FIG. 1; column 4, lines 4-11). However, Sluetz’ proximal connector 2 does have two electrodes 6, 11 that are electrically isolated and connected to separate conductors 56, 61 (FIG. 2; column 5, lines 20-24). Claim 1 further requires that at each position of the lead connector within the connector bore, one of the lead connector contacts is electrically connected to the pulse generator by the bore contact and another one of the lead connector contacts that is inside the bore connector is electrically disconnected from the pulse generator. Contrary to this feature, Sluetz teaches that the first and second electrodes 6, 11 of proximal connector 2 are both electrically connected to output electrodes 16 and 17, respectively (FIG. 8; column 7, lines 10-12). Since neither Sluetz nor Goldreyer teach that another one of the lead connector contacts inside the bore connector is electrically disconnected from the pulse generator, the combination fails to establish *prima facie* obviousness for claim 1 for at least this reason. MPEP 2143.03. Claims 2-3, 5, and 9 are allowable at least because any claim that depends from a nonobvious independent claim is also nonobvious. MPEP 2143.03.

Claim 2 further recites that at each position an electrical connection is made between a second bore contact and a third one of the lead connector contacts. As explained above, Sluetz' proximal connector 2 (FIGs. 2, 8, and 9) has only two proximal connector electrodes 6, 11. While Sluetz contemplates using more than two proximal connector electrodes, Sluetz also states that the proximal connector electrodes must be cascaded in the manner that is described (column 3, lines 54-59). Sluetz teaches that the proximal connector 2 is designed so that the functions of electrodes 6, 11 may be reversed by axial repositioning of the proximal connector 2 (see, e.g., column 6, line 52 to column 7, line 40). Therefore, an odd number of proximal electrodes would never be present with Sluetz' proximal connector 2, otherwise the function of the odd electrode could not be reversed. While even numbers of electrodes greater than 3 (4, 6, 8, etc.) do include three electrodes, according to Sluetz all of the electrodes on the proximal connector 2 must be electrically connected both before and after the axial repositioning in order for their functions to be reversed. Thus, contrary to features recited in claim 1 and claim 2, Sluetz' proximal connector 2 can not make an electrical connection between first and second bore contacts and first and third lead connector contacts, respectively, while simultaneously having a second lead connector contact within the bore connector being electrically disconnected from the pulse generator. For this additional reason, the combination of Sluetz and Goldreyer fails to establish *prima facie* obviousness for claim 2.

Claim 5 recites that the means for reversibly locking the lead connector within the bore at the multiple positions along the bore includes a deflectable member projecting into the bore. It was previously alleged (for claim 1) that releasable connectors 27 and 28 (nearest logical elements near column 6, line 21) constituted the recited locking means. Contrary to allegations for claim 5, it is apparent that the seal plug 25 (FIG. 1; column 4, line 9) is not part of the releasable connectors 27 and 28 (FIG. 6). For this additional reason, the

combination of Sluetz and Goldreyer fails to establish *prima facie* obviousness for claim 5.

Claims 4 and 6-8 are allowable at least because any claim that depends from a nonobvious independent claim is also nonobvious. For the reasons presented above, reconsideration and allowance of the pending claims is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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